

The Summit of the Americas and the Caribbean

By

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Today I am going to concentrate on the Summit of the Americas. And the Summit process is a unique mechanism in this hemisphere, and it plays an important role in reinforcing the strong ties between the United States and the Caribbean, as well.

Here in the Caribbean we share bold objectives for the Summit process. At a meeting in May 2003, for example, The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) foreign ministers stated that they viewed the January Special Summit--the one in Monterrey in 2004--"as an opportunity to advance regional issues and to re-engage the hemisphere at the highest political level in a shared vision for the creation of a hemispheric community which provided enhanced opportunities for the progressive economic and social development of all its peoples." That's a Caribbean quote. That's CARICOM. We agree. We share those objectives, and we believe that each Summit should successively lead to deeper hemispheric cooperation.

A Commitment to Multilateralism That Works

My country recognizes the value of this type of sustained engagement with this region. That is why we are committed to this process, and that is why President Bush announced the Third Border Initiative at the Quebec City Summit of the Americas in early 2001. The Third Border Initiative provides a framework for U.S.-Caribbean cooperation that complements the Summit process, and we are supporting that framework with nearly \$4 million in funding

this year. And in the most recent budget that has come out that has been increased, if I am not mistaken.

At the Special Summit last January, the United States, CARICOM, and the Dominican Republic issued a joint statement that reaffirms our commitment to the Third Border Initiative, to democracy, to human rights, to open economies, and to strengthening our cooperation in responding to global and hemispheric challenges. The statement also calls on governments to work to implement a program for high-level consultations and joint working groups. More recently, the United States has agreed to provide almost \$120 million for disaster relief assistance--\$26 million to Jamaica, with its focus on job creation--to the Caribbean in the wake of the devastation caused by the hurricanes this fall. And let me add, parenthetically, that we must look to the next hurricane season to prepare, and I do have some comments to make about how we should--might--be going about that.

The United States recognizes that the majority of the challenges that our countries face in this globalized world require cooperation and mutual support. Like the rest of the countries in the Summit process, we are developing our agenda in the Americas in step with the agenda our leaders have established together.

And before I outline those priorities, let me mention this: President Bush was just

elected for a second 4-year term. If you take a look at the speech he gave in Canada last week at Halifax--and I hope that the Embassy will provide you with a copy of it--there was a section on multilateralism. This President believes in multilateralism. This President believes in making multilateral organizations stronger and more effective, and not just talk shops, where issues are debated endlessly and no action is taken. That is something I call your attention to, as you contemplate Bush administration policy in the second 4 years. So, in this hemisphere, let me outline what the key priorities are:

1. To strengthen democracy for the benefit of all peoples through such instruments as the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and good governance programs such as those at the OAS and the Inter-American Development Bank;
2. To foster prosperity and well being for all through sustainable growth, technical assistance programs, and the expansion of free trade;
3. To protect and promote human rights and inclusion through the Inter-American human rights system, the Inter-American Commission on Women, and similar international organizations; and
4. To improve hemispheric security, and especially the fight against drug trafficking, terrorism and transnational crime, by working together in the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse (CICAD) a premier inter-American organization, the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) which is meeting in 2 months in Trinidad & Tobago with an agenda focusing on airport

security, seaport security, cyber security and other similar organizations. And let me add right here that this agenda of the Bush administration is a bipartisan agenda as far as the United States of America is concerned. You don't find differences between Democrats and Republicans in the United States on this agenda. As a matter of fact, you find very little differences between the parties on Western Hemisphere agendas North, Central, South America and the Caribbean. It deserves a very close look. We are attempting to create a dialogue of cooperation.

Creating a Dialogue for Cooperation

The Summits both reflect our progress on these issues and provide a vehicle for moving forward. At the Quebec City Summit in 2001, for example, leaders called for establishment of this Inter-American Democratic Charter, which now exists, to promote the active defense of representatives of democracy in our hemisphere.

The Summit process also gave birth to our hemisphere's vision for integrating our economies and building prosperity through a Free Trade Area of the Americas, or FTAA. Leaders launched discussions on the FTAA at the first Summit of the Americas in Miami in the mid-1990s. The United States is fully committed to completing a high-quality agreement consistent with the framework that trade ministers laid out in Miami in November 2003. As co-chairs of the FTAA process, U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Zoellick and Brazilian Foreign Minister Amorim have recently exchanged letters with a view to preparing the table for renewed progress. Both of our countries see this as a very positive step.

Related to the FTAA is the Hemispheric Cooperation Program that trade ministers established in 2002 to help ensure that small and developing countries benefit from free trade. The United States actively supports the Hemispheric Cooperation Program through programs that assist the private sector in becoming a competitive engine for growth. In 2003, the United States contributed over \$20 million to the Caribbean in trade-capacity building activities, and the total for 2004 will be more than \$32 million for that purpose.

Our commitment to free trade and democracy are really the tip of the iceberg in terms of all that we share in this Hemisphere. Geography, culture, security, and the environment also bring us together in different ways. And that is why our engagement through the Summit process is so far-reaching. Our most recent comprehensive Summit plan of action, from the Quebec City Summit, contains 18 different initiatives for hemispheric cooperation. These initiatives range from rural development to infrastructure investment to hemispheric security and beyond.

Turning Words Into Actions

In between Summits, these themes and the mandates from the leaders serve to guide ministerial and technical processes. Each day, in hundreds of different ways, multilateralism--positive multilateralism, effective multilateralism--is alive in this Hemisphere, whether through sharing of best practices in the fight against drug trafficking (Operation Kingfish), supporting the Justice Studies Center of the Americas in its work to strengthen national judicial systems, collaborating to restore full democracy in Haiti, or sending emergency assistance to countries suffering from natural disasters. To that I would add: electoral observation missions

from the OAS. I would add support for trade efforts by the OAS special office for strengthening trade. There are so many things but yet no publicity. And the reason they get no publicity is because, you know, when democracy is moving forward, when there is effective international cooperation, that's like reporting on growing grass, or growing flowers. There's no news there. But it moves forward steadily. The goal of each of these activities is to ensure that the Summit process leads to positive and concrete results. If we don't achieve that objective positive, concrete, measurable results then we will have failed.

Leaders know that progress doesn't happen because of rhetoric. It happens because of specific, measurable achievements. And that is why, in the Summit process and other regional initiatives, President George Bush's focus has been on concrete objectives. Consider education, for example. At the Quebec City Summit, President Bush announced a plan to establish hemispheric centers for teacher training. Three centers are now up and running in the South America, Central America, and Caribbean regions. The centers focus on reading instruction in the early years of schooling, where the opportunity for positive impact is greatest. With \$5.5 million in support from USAID so far, the Caribbean facility, announced here at the University of the West Indies, has trained over 1,700 teachers in the past 2 years. This means giving as many as 70,000 students from the region every year a better education. And that goes on year after year. And one of the things I am going to do today--one of the pleasant things I am going to do today--is to visit a school that has benefited from CETT and to visit the University where all of this takes place. This is something that my President initiated, and it's up and running

here, and in Central America, and in South America. The Center, as well--and this is important has leveraged assistance from the private sector Scholastic, a children's publishing and media company and co-sponsor of our Center here in Jamaica, is donating over 150,000 books to schools in the Caribbean.

In addition to education, leaders at each of the previous Summits of the Americas have stressed the need to respond to the threat posed by HIV/AIDS. President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief commits more than \$15 billion over 5 years to this cause, including \$9 billion for Haiti, Guyana and 13 other of the most afflicted countries. In the Caribbean, we are working with our partners to establish a network of HIV/AIDS training centers to help meet the demand for health care providers trained in HIV/AIDS and by the way, Jamaica is very [inaudible] in HIV/AIDS, and very dynamic. Efforts are under way to establish these centers here in Jamaica, as well as in Haiti, the Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, the United States is providing \$1 billion to ongoing bilateral programs in more than 100 countries, including nearly all of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United States supports the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Here in this country there is a \$15 million World Bank loan to deal with AIDS I understand, and a \$23 million Global Fund grant, so there are efforts going on here.

The Bush Administration is devoting significant resources to economic development as well. At the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, President Bush and other leaders recognized that, "each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development" and that, "sound

policies and good governance at all levels are necessary to ensure [the] effectiveness" of development assistance. In response, President Bush proposed a new mechanism for U.S. economic development assistance: The Millennium Challenge Account, or MCA. The MCA targets assistance at countries that meet essential governance criteria ruling justly (that means fighting corruption effectively, measurably), investing in their people (that means investing in education and health), and encouraging economic freedom (that means having the right policies to move a country forward). MCA is now receiving \$1.5 billion annually, and President Bush has pledged to increase funding for the MCA to \$5 billion by 2006, roughly a 50% increase over previous U.S. core development assistance. Bolivia, Honduras, and Nicaragua are currently eligible for assistance in this Hemisphere, and additional countries will be considered each year and there are Caribbean countries on the cusp for assistance as well. By the way, I talked about bipartisanship in the U.S. foreign policy approach. With regard to the Millennium Challenge Account and I don't know if I mentioned this to the Ambassador the latest issue of "Foreign Affairs" has an article by Morton Halperin, who was a key economic advisor to President Clinton, and Halperin has accepted and embraced MCA as a forward-leading, smart new approach to development and has called on Congress to provide money to the President (inaudible). This is an example of how we come together on foreign policy objectives in a bipartisan way in the United States.

Partnering for Reform

These examples demonstrate President Bush's belief that achieving concrete results on the Summit of the Americas mandates demands concerted, cooperative

efforts. But most of all, it requires each country, as an equal and sovereign partner in the Summit process, to take responsibility for implementing the Summit framework the leaders have laid out. Often, this doesn't require new resources. But it does require political will.

At the Special Summit last January, leaders in Monterrey spelled out some of the most pressing tasks ahead, and focused on what each country needs to do to meet our objectives. Leaders limited the scope of commitments at the Special Summit to a few high-priority issues, both to magnify the opportunities and to get down to brass tacks. In other words, they agreed to get beyond the generalities and the rhetoric to take concrete actions by specific dates. Let me mention a few:

Leaders agreed to cut red tape and reduce the time and cost of starting a business by the next Summit in 2005. In all our countries, small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of the economy. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises account for 99% of the businesses and 70% of the jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean. But the average time for starting a business 10 weeks is longer than in any other region in the world. And the average cost of starting a business is 60% of per capita gross national income. It's easy to see how this not only affects competitiveness, but also represents a very high barrier for the poor. Now I will say this: Jamaica is kind of it's at the top of the list. You do well in this area in terms of average time of starting a business. Of course, there is always the red tape, the bureaucracy component, and in practically every country in the hemisphere that issue deserves attention.

Leaders at the Special Summit realized that small business development depends, in part, on financing. So, leaders endorsed the Inter-American Development bank's goal of tripling credit through the banking system for small and medium-sized enterprises by 2007. They also committed to strengthen property rights and the use of property as collateral by the next Summit in November. Here in Jamaica, USAID and private sector financial institutions have addressed the issue of credit, for small and medium-sized enterprises. But, countries really want to grow. They really want job creation. This is the place to put your emphasis. This summer--and this is a multi-faceted effort on our part, too--the USAID launched an Inter-American Alliance for Accountability on Property Rights with the goal of working together to define benchmarks for success and to encourage sharing of best practices. With a robust and stable property rights regime, individuals and businesses enjoy the collateral to take out loans and buy or sell ownership to others.

Social issues were also Special Summit priorities. Leaders agreed on the goal of providing antiretroviral therapy to all who need it as soon as possible and to at least 600,000 people living with AIDS before the 2005 Summit. That number, by the way, came from the Pan American Health Organization, which follows this subject very closely. Leaders also committed to improving accountability by publishing reports on their education systems before the next summit in 2005. Education reform is a huge issue in this hemisphere, and the ideas is to have publicly disseminated reports which would define benchmarks for success, and to encourage sharing of best practices among countries. So all of these together form the component parts of reforming societies to move them ahead in terms of growth. The object behind the

education part is to enable parents, students, and decision-makers to identify opportunities for improvement and to help get people engaged at the grassroots in making education better. And by the way, and this is important, on the theme of corruption, the leaders committed to deny safe haven to corrupt officials, to those who corrupt them, and to their assets, and to set in motion a high-level effort to strengthen our hemispheric mechanisms for cooperating in the fight against corruption.

Conclusion: Working Together Toward the Next Summit

The next Summit is coming up in 11 months in Argentina, and the theme is going to be "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance." It's a theme that builds naturally on the concrete mandates from the Special Summit that I just reviewed with you. Robust job creation isn't possible without competitive economies, effective education and health systems, and efficient, transparent and honest governments.

The reason I'm here is because my government wants to maintain a dialogue with the Jamaican government, and with the Jamaican people, on the Summit process, on how to implement the commitments from previous Summits, and on the shape of the 2005 Summit--in particular, how to make sure it addresses real needs in concrete ways.

The next months are going to be very busy. The OAS will be hosting a civil society meeting to discuss the Summit theme at the end of January in Washington. In March, all the governments will be meeting in Argentina to begin discussions in earnest on the shape of the next Summit. In June, the United States will host the meeting of the

OAS in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We are very much interested in the United States--we are working with civil society, dealing with civil society regularly, to review the Summit commitment, to make sure that my government is following up on our commitment. This is happening in many countries of the hemisphere as well, because the leaders will have to report to each other at the next Summit on the commitment, and whether there was deliverance of the goals or not.

So we see, let me get back to where we are, at Fort Lauderdale in mid-year, in June we see the General Assembly as an opportunity to build on commitments, and in particular to focus on how we can strengthen democratic institutions to make them more effective, more transparent, and more accountable. This has to be a priority if we are serious about job creation, so we see the Assembly as leading right into the Summit, with a focus on practical ways to deal with job creation not rhetorical ones practical ones.

After the General Assembly, negotiations will intensify. So you can see that we don't really have a lot of time. We can't afford to wait until a couple of months before the next Summit in Lauderdale, chasing around saying, "Oh, what are we going to do." (Inaudible) My government has started and we're encouraging each of the Caribbean governments to do the same. So that's why I am here--post the election, to raise the American government flag and to call attention to the fact that we have the opportunity for effective multilateralism coming next year, with the OAS, and through the Summit process, and it is up to us, all of us, to get started. Not just the government types, not just the bureaucrats at the Embassy. But the media have to be cognizant of this and civil society has to take ownership as well. Because democracies are the property of all of us.